

Spring 1-15-2006

ENG 3801-001: Chaucer

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English 3801: Chaucer Spring 2006

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Office Hours: When my door is open and M/W/F 10-11, M/W 12-1, and by appointment

About the Course

Hailed by John Dryden in 1700 as the “Father of English Poetry,” Chaucer is still celebrated as the greatest of the medieval English poets. In fact, some critics find his work so self-aware, so perceptive, so invested in his characters’ humanity that they prefer to consider him a Renaissance, rather than a medieval, writer and thinker. One project of this course will be to consider Chaucer’s relation to his literary and social (to his medieval) contexts in order to ask how he responds to them; in what ways is he commenting on, manipulating, revising, and reflecting his world? As we ask these questions, examining Chaucer as an agent of his ideas, we will also be thinking about the poems as their own agents. Do these poems speak in ways that move beyond authorial intent? What do they say and how do they say it? All critical perspectives are welcome as we explore the rich and complex world of Chaucer’s imagination.

Required Texts:

Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales: Complete*, ed. Larry D. Benson

Course Requirements/ Evaluation

1) midterm exam	15%
2) final exam	20%
3) short paper (5 pages)	15%
4) final paper (8 pages).	20%
5) class participation (may include short writings and quizzes)	30%

Policies

- 1) The reading load for this course is heavy and the material challenging, so make sure you allow yourself plenty of time to complete the assigned reading. Keep in mind that if you come to class unprepared, you’ll lose participation credit. On the less punitive side, class is simply a lot more fun and interesting when you know what everyone else is talking about and have ideas of your own to contribute.

- 2) Much of what you will learn in this course will come from ideas generated in class discussion and so your presence in, and engagement with, the class are essential.
- 3) Assignments must be handed in within the first five minutes of class on the day they are due unless we have worked out a prior arrangement. Work handed in after that time will lose half a letter grade for each calendar day it is late. No work will be accepted a week after the deadline.
- 4) You must successfully complete all work for the course in order to receive a passing grade.
- 5) You must pass a reading quiz in order to pass the course.

Plagiarism Policy

The following is the English department's statement concerning plagiarism:

“Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work’ (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including a grade of ‘F’ for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.”

While I assume I’ll have no need to impose penalties for plagiarism, the ones I consider appropriate are that the student fail the course and be reported to the Judicial Affairs Office. If at any point in your writing for this course (or for another, if you like) you’re uncertain about whether you’re using sources appropriately, please come and talk to me.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please let me know and please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Syllabus

(I’ll notify you in advance of any changes)

Week 1: (Jan 9-13)

Editor’s introduction to *The Canterbury Tales*
General Prologue, lines 1-164

Week 2: (Jan 16-20)

Mon 16th: King’s Birthday – no class
GP, lines 165-541

Week 3: (Jan 23-27)
GP, lines 542-858

Week 4: (Jan 30-Feb 3)
The Knight's Tale, lines 859-1880

Week 5: (Feb 6-10)
KnT, lines 1881-3108
The Miller's Tale

Week 6: (Feb 13-17)
Fri., Feb 18th Lincoln's Birthday – no class
The Reeve's Tale
The Cook's Tale

Week 7: (Feb 20-24)
The Man of Law's Tale
The Wife of Bath's Prologue
First Paper is due

Week 8: (Feb 27- March 3)
The Wife of Bath's Tale
Midterm Exam

Week 9: (March 6-10)
The Summoner's Tale
The Friar's Tale

Week 10: (March 13-17)
Spring Break – no classes

Week 11: (March 20-24)
The Clerk's Tale
The Merchant's Tale

Week 12: (March 27-31)
The Squire's Tale
The Franklin's Tale
The Physician's Tale

Week 13: (April 3-7)
The Pardoner's Tale
The Shipman's Tale

Week 14: (April 10-14)

The Prioress's Tale

The Tale of Sir Thopas

Final paper is due

Week 15: (April 17-21)

The Monk's Tale

The Nun's Priest's Tale

Week 16: (April 24-28)

The Second Nun's Tale

Chaucer's Retraction

You will have a final exam during exam week.